DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 145 CS 001 913

TITLE	Child Parent Centers.
INSTITUTION	Chicago Public Schools, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	74
NOTE	7p.; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 PLUS POSTAGE. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Disadvantaged Youth; Early Childhood Education; *Effective Teaching; Language Development; *Parent Participation; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS	Effective Reading Programs; Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I; ESEA Title I; *Exemplary Reading Programs; Right to Read

ABSTRACT

One of twelve exemplary programs summarized in the Introduction to Right to Read's "Effective Reading Programs: Summaries of 222 Selected Programs" (CS001934), the goal of this program is to reach disadvantaged children when they are three years old and to provide them with consistent, unbroken instruction through the third grade. Eleven centers serve a total of over 2000 inner-city children, each center offering a unique instructional program tailored to its own community. All centers have a basic skills orientation and aim at developing pupils' use of language, but while some centers use tightly structured linguistic programs, others have chosen approaches which allow more pupil independence. Parents have an integral role in the program, spending two days a month at their centers in meetings, in home economics classes, or as staff volunteers. (WR/AIR)

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PROGRAM AREA: Reading/Disadvantaged

PROJECT TITLE: Child Parent Centers

LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois

SOURCES AND LEVEL OF FUNDING:

Federal Title I Funds:	$3,336,614
State Funds:	421,103
Local Funds:	438,290

PROGRAM START DATE: 1967

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Goals and Objectives. The program attempts to reach children when they are young (3) and provide consistent, unbroken instruction for six years, through grade three. Instruction is centered in basic language and reading skills, and parents play an important role in the growth of their children. Thus the program aims to build in early childhood a strong foundation for cognitive and affective growth.

Context. The program operates in Title I inner city areas of Chicago. Over 90% of its clients are black, with the rest primarily of Spanish surname. Average family income level of clients is under $6,000 per year. Areas served are those not served by Head Start, Model Cities Preschool programs, or other early education programs.

Program Description.

Grade levels, years of operation, size. Children attend two preschool years and one kindergarten year of half-day sessions, and primary grades one through three, full day sessions. The program began in 1967, and has since expanded to 11 centers, and a total of 2,275 clients. Individual class size is 15 in the preschool program and 22 in the primary grades.

Staffing. Personnel in the following roles and numbers are employed in the programs' 11 centers (when less than full time, the percent is given): center principals--one per center at an average of 50% time; head teachers--one per center at seven centers; assistant principals--one per center; teachers--one per 15 children at preschool ages and per 22 children in primary grades; licensed practical nurse--one per center; school-community resource person--one per center; teacher aides--one per teacher; and clerks--one per center.

Additionally the program employs a director at 20% time; a staff assistant; six adjustment teachers at 50% time; four teacher nurses; four social workers; four speech therapists; one psychologist; and one librarian.

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Preservice and inservice training. Inservice training for teachers and aides is conducted by Department of Curriculum consultants, other Board of Education personnel, resource personnel from educational institutions, and representatives of publishing companies. Topics covered include the philosophy of early childhood education, the remediation of learning disabilities, and the utilization of new materials and publications in the areas of preschool and primary education.

Curricula, materials. The instructional program at each of the centers is unique, tailored to the community which it serves, and designed to meet the specific needs of its own pupils. Some of the centers have chosen tightly structured linguistic programs, others have chosen language experience programs which allow more pupil independence. All have a basic skills orientation and aim at developing greater pupil facility in the use of language so that pupils become more successful readers.

Formal instruction is mixed with group activities (singing, rhymes, stories, filmstrips, outdoor play, snacks), instruction in various subject areas (science, health, art, social studies, math), and individual and small group games (puzzles, dolls, paint, clay, cutouts, other manipulatives). Phonograph and tape recording activities also supplement classroom instruction.

Teachers and aides give rewards and praise for children's successes, strengthening their self-identity. At most centers children remain in the program through the third grade, benefiting from a consistent approach, philosophy, facility, and staff for six years, and avoiding the three time violation of program continuity which is the average for Title I children.

Facilities. One center is housed in a permanent building with many classrooms and offices; three in demountables, pre-fabricated garage-like buildings; and seven in clusters of mobile units (20' X 40' trailers) joined by ramps. Excepting the large center, each of these has six to eight classrooms, a teacher's room and a main office. Five of the centers are located on regular elementary school grounds.

Time Involved. Children attend classes for half days through kindergarten and for full days through the first three primary grades. Following the third grade they feed into regular public schools. Half day sessions run from 8:30 to 11:30 and 11:30 to 2:30. Full day sessions go from 9:00 to 2:30.

Parental Involvement. Parents play an integral role in the program, spending two days a month at the center, either in meetings, home economics classes, or as staff volunteers. They also help to plan new centers and programs, contribute materials, and learn how to instruct their children at home. They thus contribute on both a policy advisory level and on the child-parent relationship level.

Cost. Total program costs for 1973-74 are $4,196,057. Annual per pupil cost of the program across all grade levels is $1,844, which is $548 more than that of the district's regular program. Instructional materials for a class of 30 costs approximately $2000 annually.

Project officials estimate that the program ultimately saves money, if compensatory education past the third grade can be eliminated as projected.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS: (See attached section.)

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS:

Preliminary Statement

Children participating in the CPC Program probably represent a selected higher ability subgroup of all children who live in Title I attendance areas. Presumably, the voluntary commitment of parents indirectly selects children whose parents are more involved with and responsive to their children's learning needs. The percentile ranges of scores in the Caldwell Pre-school Inventory for three- and four-year-old children enrolled in the CPC Program indicate also, however, that the full range of learning potential is represented in this population of CPC-enrolled children, half of whose families live in areas characterized by a 50% poverty level. Early intervention, with parental commitment actually part of the program "treatment", appears to benefit these admittedly selected children. Despite this selection factor, the recommendation to disseminate the program information is based on the following considerations:

1. Preschool CPC children in Title I eligible areas reflect the full ability range, so learning potential is fully represented at the preschool ages.
2. CPC early intervention produces better than national normative achievement at the K, 1, 2, and 3 levels for CPC-enrolled children.
3. While CPC preschool enrollees are selected on ability indirectly as a result of parental concern with their learning, it is assumed unlikely that these children would be expected to achieve at normative standards in the early school years without external intervention that provides a learning environment capitalizing on parental concern.
4. Upgrading the academic achievement of inner city children should be concerned primarily with prevention of later learning deficit rather than remediation after deficit is observed.
5. There is much evidence, known to the AIR evaluator, that inner city Chicago students' academic potential at the 12th grade level is at least one standard deviation, on the average, below that of national 12th graders (measured by ACT, SAT tests).
6. CPC learning activities for K, 1, 2, and 3 children indicate that the CPC opportunity starts children on the right track, able to achieve at the primary level at national norm levels. It can be anticipated these children might otherwise show the expected lower-than-norm achievement growth rates without this opportunity.

Evaluation conducted by. The Institute for Development of Educational Auditing, A. Jackson Stenner, Vice President.

Sample size and method. Criteria used to establish Title I eligible elementary school attendance areas were:

1. 35 percent concentration of children from low income areas: or

2. low-income concentration percentage is above the district-wide 25 percent level and the number of children from low-income families is 150 or more; or

3. low-income concentration is 15 percent or above with the number of children from low-income families is 385 or more.

CPC's were established in 11 areas; poverty level percentages ranged from 31% to 56%, with 50% being the median for the 11 areas. A baseline study conducted in 1969-70 indicated that children selected for the CPC Program reflect a wide range of ability even though pupils are admitted without consideration of the applicants' ability level. For four centers, median scores by center for children aged 3-0 to 3-11 ranged from the 33rd to the 85th percentile on the Caldwell Pre-school Inventory; median scores by center for children ages 4-0 to 4-11 ranged from the 50th to the 99th percentile. It is presumed that these children reflect the higher ability level within the Title I eligible area population because of selection resulting from parental volunteering for CPC participation.

Students were tested for reading readiness at the end of kindergarten and were tested for reading achievement at the end of first grade, second grade, and third grade. Sample sizes at each grade level in the 1971-72 evaluation, the latest available, were as follows:

Kindergarten:	296
First Grade:	137
Second Grade:	70
Third Grade:	95

Attrition at grade levels 2 and 3 is 6% per year (as established from pre-post testing of locally developed instruments).

Comparison methods. Comparisons are with national test norms and with norms for Title I students determined in a 1972 ESEA Title I Evaluation by Wargo, et. al.

Measures. Tests used were the Metropolitan Reading Readiness and Metropolitan Reading Achievement, Primary I and II. Subtests for the former include: word meaning, listening, matching, alphabet, numbers, and copying. For the letter subtests are: word knowledge, reading total reading, and spelling. The Reading Readiness Test has reliabilities of .90 and up for kindergarten and Grade 1 students, and the Achievement Tests have a median reliability of .91. The Metropolitan Tests have favorable reviews in the MMY, although their adequacy for poor learners is questioned.

The program also uses a number of locally developed instruments to gauge attitudes and classroom behavior, and to keep each center up to program specifications.

Data collection. Students are tested for reading readiness in May of kindergarten, and for reading achievement in May of grades 1, 2. and 3.

Data analysis. Descriptive statistics reported are means (in grade equivalent units) and profile summaries.

Changes in outcome and their reliability. The following table summarizes the comparison of 324 Child Parent Center kindergarten students with national norms, based on the five profile categories of the Metropolitan Readiness Test, as administered in the Spring of 1972. As can be seen, the readiness of the CPC group is well above the national average.

	A (Superior)	B (High normal)	C (Ready)	D (Probably not ready)	E (Definitely not ready)
Child Parent Center Percentages	13%	34%	35%	17%	1%
National Percentages	7%	24%	38%	24%	7%

As shown 82% of the CPC Kindergarten students were ready for first grade reading. The typical CPC student is functioning at approximately the 60th percentile in reading readiness.

Statistics for students in grades 1-3, given in grade equivalents, based on Spring 1972 Metropolitan Reading Achievement Scores, and comparing Child Parent Center students with National Title I students, show the following:

End of Grade:	End of Year Means for Grade: 1 (N=137)	2 (N=79)	3 (N=95)
Child Parent Center Mean Scores	2.0	2.9	3.9
Average Title I Students	1.5	2.2	2.9

Testing of the first "graduating class", in the fourth grade in public school, suggests the projected trend will be followed quite closely. Their mean grade quivalent score was 4.9 projected.

Educational significance. Disadvantaged students are maintaining national norm average reading scores, as opposed to their counterparts who have dropped one grade back by the end of grade three (with a projected two grades deficit by the end of grade six).